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Foes of Sandinistas, Under U.S. Pressure, Move Toward Unity

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SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 30 — Nicaraguan rebels based in Costa Rica have voted to form an alliance with others based in Honduras with the aim of strengthening their operations, officials of the Costa Rican group said today.

But they said Edén Pastora Gómez, the military leader of the group, the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance, had refused to join the new alliance.

Mr. Pastora has argued for months that the Honduran-based group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, must first purge its leadership of officers who served in the National Guard of President Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

C.I.A. Pressure Reported

Mr. Pastora, the most popular of the anti-Sandinista leaders among Nicaraguan rebel sympathizers, commands 2,000 to 3,000 rebel troops, believed to be the majority of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance's forces. The officials acknowledged that his refusal to accept the new alliance would weaken it militarily and politically.

The officials said that for months they had been under pressure from the Central Intelligence Agency to unite with the Honduran-based rebels. The C.I.A., they said, had cut off funds to the group several times in the past in an effort to get it to form an alliance.

Working under what a well-placed member of the group described as "a C.I.A. ultimatum," reportedly sched-

uled to expire today, the majority of the group's 27-member Democratic Assembly, the top decision-making body, voted Monday night to unify with the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the officials said.

According to one official, the C.I.A. told the group at the beginning of May that it had 30 days to form an alliance "or they would cut off funding." He said that his understanding was that the ultimatum had been conveyed to the group's chief political spokesman and main fund raiser, Alfonso Robelo Palles, during his visit to the United States last month. Mr. Robelo has led the unity movement within the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

The official said that in a meeting on Tuesday "only Pastora and his followers opposed unity."

Officials of the group, which is known by its Spanish acronym of Arde, said details of the agreement would be worked out in meetings with the National Democratic Force over the next few days.

Arde sources said it was likely that overall military command would go to one of several commanders of the Nicaraguan Revolutionary Force. Political leadership of the new organization, the sources said, will most likely to be shared by Alfonso Robelo and Alfonso Callejas, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force's chief civilian leader and a first cousin of Mr. Robelo.

Small-scale integration of the two guerrilla armies is already under way, officials of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance said, and is now expected to be accelerated. For several months, they said, small units of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force have been operating from Costa Rica and recruiting in southern Nicaragua.

In addition, they said, about 100 guerrillas loyal to Mr. Robelo have been carrying out "reconnaissance missions" in the north where the Honduran, Salvadoran and Nicaraguan borders meet.

The Democratic Revolutionary Alliance is a coalition of six organizations that for the past year have been fighting in southern Nicaragua from bases in Costa Rica. Most of the guerrillas belong to Mr. Pastora's Sandino Revolutionary Front.

The Nicaraguan Democratic Force is the largest of the anti-Sandinista groups and is believed to have 8,000 to 10,000 guerrillas fighting out of bases in Honduras. Officials of the group have long sought to unite with the Costa Rican-based group.

According to reports here and in Washington, the C.I.A. finances both organizations. Officials of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance publicly deny receiving money from the C.I.A. directly.

Over the past month, in a series of meetings in Miami and San José, the Costa Rican capital, the two groups failed to reach agreement on an alliance, largely because of Mr. Pastora's demand that the Nicaraguan Democratic Force remove from leadership former national guard officers, ARDE officials said. They said that pressure for unity had increased recently.

A Nicaraguan with links to the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance said he understood that the group was asking for the removal of "about a half-dozen" former Somozistas from the military high command of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force. He added that there were former national guardsmen among ARDE's leadership, but that the Honduran-based rebels were not demanding their removal.

The political leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, Mr. Callejas, denied in an interview that there were former national guard officers in top leadership positions. "We do not have any Somozistas," he said.

One Democratic Revolutionary Force official said the C.I.A. hopes that once the guerrillas are united they can gain control of Nicaragua's Atlantic coast.